



One of the Quaker Weekend contributions

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

December 2018

Diary Dates for December

- Saturday December 1st Prisoners for Peace Day https://www.wri-irg.org/en/campaigns/prisoners_for_peace
Friday December 7th Farmers' Market at Colchester Arts Centre
Saturday December 8th Coffee morning at Colchester Meeting House
Sunday December 16th Christmas lunch at Colchester Meeting House
Tuesday December 25th, 10.30 - 11.00 am Meeting for Worship, Colchester

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Clerk to Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting: Diana Naylor

c/o Colchester Quaker Meeting House

6 Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF;

Web Address: www.essexsuffolkquakers.org

email address: AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org

Meetings for Worship

CLACTON

Sunday at 10.30 am
1st Wednesday each month
12 noon with Soup & Cheese

Harwich

2nd and 4th Sundays 10.30 am
St Nicholas' Church Hall,
Stour Road, Bathside CO12 3HS
Contact: Ros/Tony Eaton 01255
880500

COLCHESTER

Sunday 10.30 am

EARLS COLNE

1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays 10.30 am

SUDBURY

Sunday 10.30 am
Friars Street, Sudbury

FIRST CONTACT

FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

CLACTON.....Carol Holding

COLCHESTER.....Carol Holding

SUDBURY.....Peter Whiteley

Editorial

Dear Friends

We are all saddened by the loss of Tim Holding after a long illness. I particularly remember how marvellous he was at a very bad moment during the entertainment at a meeting at Hengrave Hall, where we had some particularly bad and unhelpful little boys. We were doing a sort of re-enactment of *Peter And The Wolf*, and these boys had run off with all our costumes (which I never saw again) at the very last moment. Nothing daunted, he said, "I am the Wolf",

Just Happened Upon

John Kay

I found the following in a book by one of my favourite authors, Kate Atkinson, which Friends may find interesting.

"Nancy easily found part-time work in the Maths Department at the Mount, a Quaker school and returned to the relief of educating clever, well-behaved girls. Viola took up a place in the junior school. Nancy

and what a wonderful Wolf he was! In fact we had a marvellous time.

You could always depend on him, not only to rescue the show but produce something much better.

I expect you can all find a memory of that sort, of Tim.

We have quite a lot of people at Meeting and lots of activity. I have been looking at old newsletters, sometimes we seemed quite despondent and not very interested in things.

News, please, to Valerie Graves.

liked the Society of Friends, she said, it was the nearest Christianity could get to agnosticism."



Meeting for Sufferings (MfS)

Robert Parkes

Friends House London 6th October 2018

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand. (Qf&P10.01)

We were, once again, joined by Young Friends (YFs). This is becoming a regular, and refreshing feature of MfS. I have not noticed any signs of the sky falling in.

In 2017, Yearly Meeting 'heard the call to examine our own diversity, particularly in our committee and organisational structure, locally and nationally'. Yearly Meeting subsequently asked MfS 'to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings...' To this end, we heard from BYM's Diversity Coordinator Edwina Peart about her early, interim findings. This was both inspiring and thought-provoking. On the one hand, it was good to hear we are mostly diverse and inclusive in terms of sexual orientation, age and gender. On the other hand, this is not always so in terms of race, socio-economic status and in relation to YFs. We

rejoice in having children in our meetings, yet it seems YFs can struggle to be heard, especially in business meetings. Moreover, it seems we might be more comfortable in welcoming someone of a different ethnicity than someone we perceive of a different class. MfS recognises a proactive approach and greater warmth of welcome are needed. There will be training and opportunities for dialogue available to meetings. For example, a diversity and inclusion National Gathering in January 2019 at Woodbrooke. MfS will return to this in the New Year. Meanwhile, meetings and committees are strongly encouraged to start or continue to discern how they can remove barriers and seek wider

participation, and to send any further minutes before the end of next February.

There's more to do in terms sustainability too. We heard of Friends and meetings struggling, often in isolation, to deliver on the Canterbury Commitment: is it all too daunting? Paul Parker, however, spoke with optimism. From his vantage point he sees what Friends are doing nationwide, and the Society has achieved a lot. For some reason meetings seem to struggle to take pride in and share with others what they've done. What's holding them back? Discernment thus far indicates we feel daunted to go further with the idea of BYM considering a target of becoming carbon neutral or 'net zero' in carbon. Meanwhile, Woodbrooke is likely to be approached to run national and regional face to face gatherings and events to nurture Friends' ministry in the testimony of sustaina-

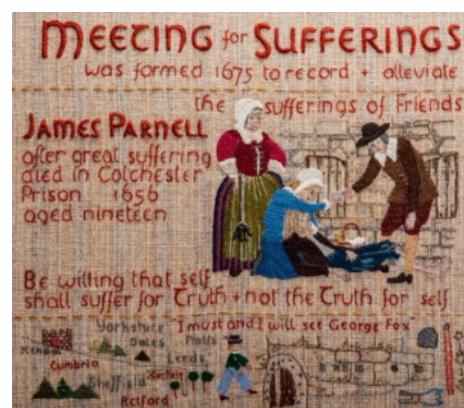
bility. Maybe all we need to do is return to the guidance in our Advices 41: 'Try to live simply'.

Yet another area of struggle is around setting priorities for centrally-managed work. BYM Trustees reported on the work that, hopefully, will lead us to deliver on Faith in the Future and move towards a simpler church. This prompted, to my mind, some unfair criticism of the Trustees - in another context I reckon it would have been called giving them a hard time. I'm bound to say I felt disappointed at this. It seemed to reflect a lack of appreciation of the huge range of work that they do in our name. Maybe it boiled down to some Friends struggling to come to terms with a reality where the Society has to: work with a finite pot of money; make decisions about laying down work; and learn to work better with others, including other friends and other meetings as

well as other organisations. Suffice to say, MfS was unable to complete its discernment on priorities and will return to this again.

On a final uplifting note, as an experiment and for the rest of the triennium it was agreed to allocate four extra places on MfS for young adult Quakers, not necessarily being in membership. Still no signs of the sky falling in.

As usual, a full report of the meeting and papers can be found on the dedicated MfS pages on the Quaker.org website. MfS also gets reported in *The Friend*.



Notes from Area Meeting

at Colchester, 11.11.2018

Jenny Kay

In the presence of God twenty including two attenders met to record of death of our Friend Tim Holding, to welcome a new member and to appoint Di Naylor as AM Clerk and Liz Prockter as AM Treasurer and Trustee. Charles Bather who clerked this meeting, will continue as Assistant Clerk until the end of 2019. Tom Tebbutt will continue to look after Sudbury's accounts with the new appointment of Assistant Treasurer Sudbury.

The Review of AM business arrangements led to the following minute:

We see advantages in freeing up the Clerks to work efficiently and joyfully on AM tasks, while sustaining proper discernment and right ordering. We wish to encourage full participation in our business meetings and hope that streamlining our procedures will go some way to ensuring this. We agree that the AM Clerk, supported by the Assistant Clerk and Trustees, may manage routine business matters by conferring or meeting outside convened AMs. Simplification of our business procedures might emerge. We ask that this arrangement be reviewed after one year, in January 2020, and a report brought to AM.

We ask each Local Meeting to organise one or more AM events for fellowship or learning, to be held at their Meeting House or

premises. This could include such things as the National Friends Fellowship of Healing, a Kindlers workshop, a talk from a Quaker speaker (including ourselves), and so on. These events would coincide with the dates of AM and would aim to be enjoyable, uplifting and possibly challenging. Smaller meetings should feel free to call upon AM for assistance with catering and other arrangements. Communicating with Friends across the AM, well and in good time, is key.

Dates of AMs in 2019 were agreed as follows:

Feb 10 Clacton
Apr 14 Sudbury
Jun 9 Earls Colne
Sep 8 Harwich
Nov 10 Colchester

Area Meeting Gatherings

Area Meeting Gathering was held at High Leigh Conference Centre the weekend of October 13-15. Twenty-five Friends and Attenders from three LMs took part. The theme of the weekend was “**From the Individual to the Collective**”. Friends who had attended spoke warmly of their rewarding experience of the weekend.

We thanked Peter Whiteley, Anne Watkinson, Sylvia Jeffcock, Sue Rhodes and Kate Powis for enabling the gathering to take place, and asked them to pass on our thanks to Mark Russ, a tutor at Woodbrooke, who facilitated much of the weekend.

Peter Whiteley was asked to go ahead with a booking for 30 places, early in 2021.

We authorise the AM Treasurer to pay any necessary deposit involved in making an advance booking. All places will be subsidised; participants will be charged a nominal sum of £50. Friends who would wish to help organise a further gathering are invited to contact Peter Whiteley.

Thank You

Una and David Lawrence

We just want to say a grateful thank you to all our friends for their love and support during our daughter Clare’s recent illness. The card that we received was heart-warming. She is now back at home perfectly well and just waiting for a special wheelchair so that she can get back to her busy life!

And to offer this part of a poem by Kahlil Gibran:

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting

As 2021 is a long way ahead, it is hoped that a weekend occasion will be held locally, sometime in 2019.

Reports Meeting for Sufferings and Quaker Life Representative Council reports were received. Both can be found in this Newsletter.

Grants to help refugees and asylum seekers We agreed to use £5,000 previously set aside for loans, to make small non-repayable grants to help refugees and asylum seekers with training expenses, language courses, bus fares to courses, tools, protective clothing etc.

Benjamin Lay In response to the request from Tim Gee, on behalf of South East London AM, to reconsider his disownment by Colchester Two Weeks Meeting in the early 1700s, we recorded the following as part of the minute:



From “In Friendship”

And let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit.

Let your best be for your friend.

If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know its flood also.

For what is your friend that you should seek him with hours to kill?

Seek him always with hours to live.

Benjamin Lay was a prophetic voice who was ahead of his time. Today, in a reputedly “post-truth” era, we must speak up for the value of truth, and in particular examine our own consciences. While we cannot put right the wrongs of the past, we can quietly declare what our consciences have revealed to be the truth of what happened to Benjamin Lay.

We, the Friends of Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting, recognise the integrity and courage of a man who called slaveholders, including Quakers, to account, who protested the abomination of slavery, upheld the equality of the sexes, and lived his life with integrity according to his Quaker beliefs. We hold that Benjamin Lay was a Friend of the Truth; we are in unity with the spirit of Benjamin Lay.

Oral History Project We gave support to the proposal from Jane Herd and Kate Powis for an oral history project to create a record of the experiences of Quaker life of the more senior members of our Area Meeting. We look forward to hearing more on this.

For it is his to fill your need,
but not your emptiness.

And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.

For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.

News from Clacton

Janet Thomas

Clacton Friends are delighted once again to hold our Meeting for Carols, to which occasion all are welcomed, on Saturday December 22nd, 3pm to 5 pm. Silva Garton-Rogers and her friend Carolyn Rogers will produce and lead it as before. This continues to be a lovely, spiritual and happy event in our calendar each year.

Another notable and important date is the Nationwide Quaker Day of Healing, to be hosted on 2nd March 2019 at Clacton Meeting, for

BYM Sustainability Gathering

Jayne Meleschko

Bridging the gap : hope and action

In 2011 Britain Yearly Meeting committed to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community. The gathering in October met to support Friends and meetings in deepening and broadening that commitment. We met a few weeks after the IPCC published their report. It made sober reading. We have an enormous task, with only 12 years to achieve the goals we signed up to in the Paris

Toads

Valerie Graves

I have always had rather a soft spot for toads, so I will tell you how I speak of them to children.

The very first day in my new house, more than sixty years ago, I opened my back door and found a small person sitting there. "Good morning, Madam", he said, "I am your gardener, and shall enjoy working for you." I had no idea what to expect, and had never seen a toad before. But I think I did know that he was a toad.

Harwich Meeting. We were very disappointed to be prevented by severe weather conditions from hosting this last year, and are very much looking forward to doing so next year.

Exciting plans for kitchen improvements are in the pipeline! We are as always very grateful to Silva's husband Martin for his expertise.

We now have a Yoga group, Buddhist groups, Art Group and first Wednesday Meeting for Worship and Lunch Group, all taking place at the Clacton Meeting House.

Happy Christmas and a good New Year to you all.

Agreement. It has become much more urgent.

And so with varying emotions we met at The Hayes in Swanwick, with most Area Meetings represented.

With the aid of short presentations, workshops and quiet periods of reflection we came together.

We looked at many areas, our situation as individuals and how we choose to live our lives, our Quaker communities – are we fully engaged? and the wider communities in which we live. Are we making our MP aware of our concerns and encouraging the government to commit fully

And he did look after my garden, eating slugs, pointing things out to me that I ought to have done. The lady next door, an energetic Lancashire housewife, thought he was revolting, even when I pointed out what a lot he did, and offering to lend him to her, to eat the slugs which were ruining her strawberry bed. (The strawberries had come through the wire netting into our garden and were flourishing on our side, whereas on her side they were being eaten by slugs.) "Shall I lend him to you?" I said. "Ugh!", she said, "no indeed - horrible slimy thing!" So I did no more,

Wildspot

Valerie Graves

It has been quite wet and a bit chillier, for which we are grateful. There are lots of plants doing very odd things and a lot of blossom on shrubs, but I am a bit wary that at any time we could slip into much colder weather. We have had some very interesting birds, but I am not very good at identifying them. Everything in my tubs seems to have died and I shall have to have a terrific spring clean. Who knows what we shall have to put up with before the spring!

to a carbon zero economy? It was also enormously helpful to chat to others informally, over coffee or lunch, exchanging ideas and hearing what projects they are involved in. I certainly came away more hopeful, even though recent reports paint a bleak picture. We have a small window of opportunity. A chance to improve the legacy we leave to our children and grandchildren.

And, since returning home, a new development.....Extinction Rebellion, a group promoting non-violent direct action.

Is change in the air?.....lets hope so

and my strawberries were magnificent!

I am afraid that is how most people reacted to toads. But they are not slimy at all, and are very friendly. It is no use trying to convert ordinary people.



QPSW Spring Conference

Eliza Jones

Journeys of Witness

22 - 24 March 2019, Alfreton

Quaker witness takes many forms – it can be both personal and shared, loud and quiet, life-long and sporadic, depleting and nourishing. Quaker Peace & Social Witness seeks to support Friends individually in their lives, jointly in their meetings and in Britain Yearly Meeting, to translate our faith into action and to be part of a movement for positive social change.

Sharing our stories connects us and deepens our understanding of our witness. This year we hope to welcome **Nim Njuguna** as our keynote speaker. Nim is a former Quaker prison chaplain and restorative justice trainer. He has recently received an Eva Koch scholarship to research diversity and inclusion in the Quaker community.

Come and find out more about the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness, how we work in the world on behalf of Friends and how you can get involved. And you can tell us how we can best support you and your meeting.

You will have the opportunity to meet and mingle with some of those who deliver the programmes of work. You will learn how work is discerned and overseen by Friends and there will be ample opportunity to reflect on what you have heard and to get to know other Friends.

The Conference is particularly aimed at:

QPSW Correspondents

New Friends/Attendees

Those new to the work of QPSW

We hope the following work programmes will be amongst those featured:

Climate Justice

Conciliation Work

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Israel Palestine

Peace Education and Campaigning and Networking

Sanctuary Everywhere

One Year UK Peaceworker Placements

We probably already have a QPSW representative but we could fund a second person to attend if they were interested, as a way of encouraging their interest and involvement with our area meeting

It would be good if we could be proactive about this opportunity and come up with names and suggestions when we next meet.

Can we try to be discerning and think of members or attendees who might be interested in this event.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/events/2019-qpsw-spring-conference>

Hedgehogs

Valerie Graves

Here is another creature that we rarely see, and they are rapidly disappearing from our gardens. I have been reading a fascinating book about hedgehogs - it seems that they are a very old type of animal, one of the very first smaller creatures to appear alongside the huge ones like the dinosaurs. I think it would not be an exaggeration to say that they were the very first small animal to appear, almost all over the world - all over the place, in India, Persia, ancient Egypt and more. One

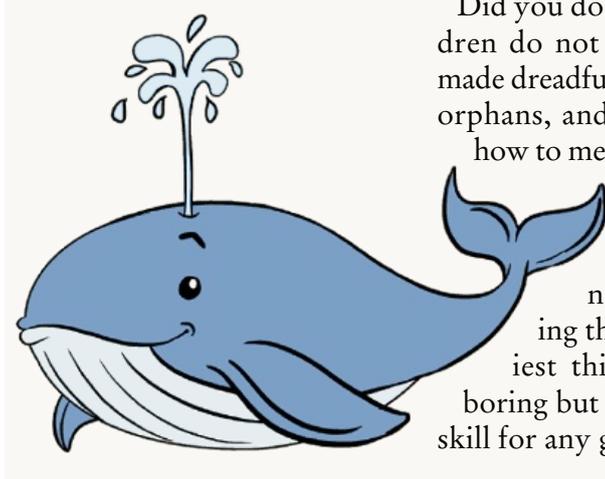


would never have thought of hedgehogs at the court of Pharaoh. It is a much more interesting creature than one might have thought. It was quite a revelation to me to read this.

One would have expected to see quite a lot of different small animals, but no. But it may not be here for very much longer, it seems.

On embroidery

Valerie Graves



Did you do sewing at school? Children do not seem to now, but we made dreadful things for unfortunate orphans, and at least we did know how to mend our stockings. (I had a tearful granddaughter who showed me a huge hole in a brand new cardigan, not realising that it was one of the easiest things to mend.) It was boring but I think it is a necessary skill for any girl or boy.

I had a terrifying Scottish grandmother who taught me. She would never look at the front of anything but only the back: “the front had better be good”, she said.

I am working at a piece of tapestry right now, which is actually a picture of a whale. I have a vague hope of finishing it before Christmas. Wish me luck!

Quaker Life Conference

Lucien de Leon

On the 12/10/2018 to the 14/10/2018, at Woodbrooke, the QLRC met.

Here are my light bulb moments, insights, challenging thoughts and that which has spoken to me and which I was asked to bring back.

Tough Issues

The operative sentiment was “All Are Welcome” and we certainly were. The meeting was about us reaching out to youth of all ages, in various ways. What can we do to help young Quakers develop in the faith?

A large portion of those who have grown up attending church are gone by the age of 14 years. No matter which denomination, the teenagers are leaving the churches, big-time. As to why, the usual suspects were floating around: the youth are reacting to hearing honey and sweet words spoken in a silken voice, whilst the poor are languishing on the steps of the church.

They are expecting or seeking some sort of a connection with the divine and feeling not to be having much luck. They see the

religious institutions as having lost their way, focusing on outer forms, buildings, music, getting bigger, getting money and forgetting what should be the objective.

The churches have become commercial businesses that are serving their own interests. They could be contributing factors to the church, denominational and faith hopping but why do our youth leave us? We had young Friends speaking about how they see and feel and how age can improve it’s relationship with youth. A good start is, for age to assume that youth is an intellectual equal and adjust only if we find a disparity. Also, a warm welcome is important. Warm is the new cool.

We looked at ways we could make the meeting more welcoming, more comfortable, for young Friends. The consensus was that the best meeting is one open to change. We need to take on new perspectives and have more events made for interaction between age groups. For change to happen the old ways must make room for the new ones.

Children can’t sit still for long but they can move in silence. We can all walk in a park or on a for-

est track in silence. We can hold a meeting for worship in a jacuzzi tub or a sauna or a swimming pool. Like Goethe, we could sit silent in nature and let it reveal itself to us. Chocky bickies and silence might catch on.

Some meetings have frequent local gatherings for children. Some hold a once a month area meeting for kids. One Friend related that the children’s meeting is convened whether there are any children present or not.

The thing is that we need to change. I know how it is to try to remain fluid and flexible whilst in the grip of the forces of petrification.

However, that’s what we need to do. We need to think differently and act differently and place ourselves in new and strange environments. Grab your sense of adventure and place yourself in the middle of the unfamiliar, whether it be people or places.

Youth is Ideological. Age is practical. They have the fire and we have the experience. We need to work together. Children and teenagers in a church are a sign that it is twice as likely to be growing. Is it also twice as likely that they will have a good life or

become excellent and admirable Hobbits?

In the Workshop “Exploring the Spiritual with Children” led by Helen Chambers we covered some things that could be helpful to young Friends: recognizing the importance of developing relationships between you and the young ones, providing opportunities for reflection, putting together explanations designed for use by youth, coming up with ways to enable and nurture their spiritu-

al growth and faith development within the life of the meeting in their own journeys.

Only half the children who are part of a faith community remain in that community as adults. Those who did not grow up in one are less likely to ever join one. In addition to lavishing all this wisdom on our youthful Quakers, we might want to reach out to kids who don't have such opportunities and bless them with an experience or two. For example we could provide

financing for some of those who are underprivileged to experience a Quaker summer school. It would probably be a help to the school as well. What do you think? What are we going to do?

Timothy Richard Holding

Born in Birmingham in September 1940, Tim was the second of four boys to Richard and Jessica Holding; Simon, his twin Nick and Jeremy.

All four boys went to Sidcot, a Quaker boarding school in Somerset. There, Tim excelled at music, rugby, cricket, art, drama, caving and dormitory wine making! He returned to the Old Scholars reunion every Easter thereafter at which he was a central pillar.

At Sidcot, aged twelve, he met Carol Catchpool who became his wife in 1964 after they were both fine art students at Durham University. Upon graduation, Tim secured his lifetime job at Colchester School of Art where he lovingly inspired several generations in drawing, painting and sculpture.

Tim had many successful solo exhibitions of paintings and sculpture throughout his career. He loved to paint water mills, machinery and moving water and his bold sculptures often incorporated wood, metal and stone.

Tim used his creative building skills and unlimited ambition to the full at Little Glebe, Spring Lane where his oak-framed art school rose out



Tim's sculpture at Castle Park

of the leafy Lexden landscape in the late 80s. There, he hosted several joy filled summer sculpture workshops. Tim's life-long love of vintage cars included restorations of several Citroens, model T Fords and many others.

Tim had many public sculpture commissions into retirement which will be enjoyed by generations to come. Tim was beloved in the community at large and was a life-long Quaker. He was a keystone of Colchester Meeting for six decades performing all roles and captivating children and adults with his beach barbecues and camping trips. Tim

had two boys Nat and David and five grandchildren Daniel, Katie, Natalie, Amanda and Rosie.



Tim's sculpture at Lexden Park